

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY USOAS:FMCNEIL:JD

APPROVED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 240009

EXDIS ,TOSEC 444

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EC

SUBJECT: CUBA SANCTIONS - TROUBLED OUTLOOK FOR QUITO

REF: (A) STATE 236997 (B) NEW DELHI 14456

FROM ACTING SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

1. A PROBABLE REVERSAL OF THE GUATEMALAN COMMITMENT HAS NOW APPARENTLY DEPRIVED CO-SPONSORS OF THE 14TH VOTE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY REQUIRED PER THE LETTER OF THE RIO TREATY.

2. THE VOTING LINEUP, BARRING DOMESTIC UPHEAVAL SOMEWHERE OR PROVOCATIVE ACT BY CASTRO, NOW APPEARS TO BE AS
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FOLLOWS:

A. COMMITTED TO LIFTING SANCTIONS: ELEVEN COUNTRIES: ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS, MEXICO, PANAMA, PERU, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND VENEZUELA.

B. VERY PROBABLE (COMMITTED BUT WITH A TINGE OF UNCERTAINTY): TWO COUNTRIES: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND HAITI, MAKING LIKELY TOTAL OF 13 VOTES FOR RESOLUTION.

C. SWING VOTES, NOW IN THE ABSTAIN COLUMN: BOLIVIA, GUATEMALA, AND NICARAGUA. BOLIVIA AND NICARAGUA CLEARLY LOOK TO THE U.S. FOR A LEAD. GUATEMALA IS MORE INDEPENDENT MINDED BUT WANTS OUR VIEWS. GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA WANTS TO LIFT SANCTIONS, IN INTERESTS OF RIO TREATY AND INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM, BUT HIS PRESIDENT, BECAUSE OF RIGHT WING POLITICAL CRITICISM, HAS REVERSED THAT COMMITMENT, AT LEAST TENTATIVELY.

3. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT HAS BECOME RATHER MORE LIKELY THAT QUITO WILL RESULT IN A LEGALLY INCONCLUSIVE OUTCOME, WITH THE CO-SPONSORS KEEPING THEIR ABSOLUTE MAJORITY BUT FALLING SLIGHTLY SHORT OF THE REQUIRED 14 VOTES. IF THE MAJORITY WILL IS THUS BLOCKED, THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES COULD BE VERY SERIOUS, PARTICULARLY AS THERE WILL BE A TENDENCY TO BLAME THE U.S. FOR THIS OUTCOME. (SEE REPORT OF ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES' CONVERSATION WITH BOWDLER SENT TOSEC 391.) VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA WILL LIKELY MOVE TO RESTORE RELATIONS WITH CUBA ANYWAY, BUT THEY WILL ALSO RESENT OUR HAVING PERSUADED THEM TO DELAY AND TO GO THE OAS ROAD IN VAIN. DISCREDITING OF RIO TREATY MAY LOOSEN RESTRAINTS AGAINST ADVENTURISM ALONG DISPUTED BORDERS (E.G. CHILE/PERU, SALVADOR/HONDURAS). MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE DAMAGE TO INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS WILL HAVE SPILL-OVER EFFECTS ON THE NEW DIALOGUE AND STIMULATE TENDENCIES TO REPLACE INTER-AMERICAN LINKAGES WITH WHOLLY LATIN GROUPINGS, FROM WHICH THE U.S. WOULD BE EXCLUDED.

4. WE HAVE SET THIS FORTH WITHOUT TRYING TO ESTIMATE DEGREES OF DAMAGE. BUT THE NATURE OF THIS QTE WE-THEY
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UNQTE RELATIONSHIP PUTS US IN THE POSITION WHERE QTE THEY UNQTE ARE GOING TO THINK THAT QTE WE UNQTE DON'T CARE ABOUT THE INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP.

5. IN VIEW OF THE CONSEQUENCES IF QUITO BECOMES A FAILURE AND AN EMBARRASSMENT, WE PUT FORTH SOME ALTERNATIVES, WHICH DO NOT REPEAT NOT INCLUDE A FAVORABLE U.S. VOTE:

A. TRY DISCREETLY TO ASSURE ENOUGH VOTES FOR A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, EVEN THOUGH WE CANNOT VOTE FOR THE RESOLUTION, THROUGH SELECTED APPROACHES TO CERTAIN COUNTRIES, PRINCIPALLY THE SWING VOTES. (THIS COULD FAIL, SINCE COUNTRIES MAY BE UNWILLING TO DO AS WE SAY AND NOT AS WE DO, AND LEAKS COULD BE DAMAGING, ALTHOUGH DEFENSIBLE ON GROUNDS THAT WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE CLEAR THAT WE ARE RESPONSIVE TO MAJORITY WILL.)

B. CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF POSTPONING, AT QUITO, A

DECISION ON THE ISSUE. (POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING ITSELF SEEMS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE; ECUADOR IS ALL GEARED UP AND RIDICULE WOULD ATTEND POSTPONEMENT.) BUT IF IT BECAME APPARENT QUITO WOULD BE A DEBACLE, IT IS REMOTELY POSSIBLE THE LATINS MIGHT WISH, AFTER DEBATE, TO POSTPONE THE DECISION. HOWEVER, SOME LATINS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY INSIST ON A VOTE.

C. WHEN WE GET TO QUITO, AND IF THE OUTCOME STILL LOOKS INCONCLUSIVE, EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR JURIDICAL LEGERDEMAIN, PERHAPS USING OUR AUTHORITY TO AGREE TO CHANGES IN THE RIO TREATY VOTING PROCEDURES TO SPARK A PRELIMINARY VOTE, BY TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, THAT THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS IN THIS INSTANCE SHOULD BE BY MAJORITY VOTE. WE WOULD VOTE IN FAVOR ON THE FIRST VOTE, ABSTAIN ON THE SECOND VOTE. THIS PROCEDURE WOULD BE TRICKY AND MIGHT FACE COMPETITION FROM AN UNWELCOME RESURRECTION OF FACIO'S QTE REVERSE TWO-THIRDS UNQTE FORMULA OF LAST YEAR. (A PROCEDURAL MANEUVER SETTING UP A SITUATION WHERE THE VOTE IS ON THE ISSUE OF RETAINING-- RATHER THAN LIFTING--SANCTIONS AND WHERE TWO-THIRDS

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WOULD THEN, BY THIS INTERPRETATION, BE REQUIRED TO KEEP THEM ON.)

6. IF YOU AGREE, WE WOULD PROPOSE FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVE A, TRYING TO ASSURE A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY. EVEN IF WE FAIL, THIS EFFORT MAY DEFLECT SOME OF THE RANCOR DIRECTED AT US AND THEREBY LESSEN SOMEWHAT THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF AN INCONCLUSIVE OUTCOME. WE WOULD PROPOSE DISCREET APPROACHES, TAILORED TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES AND PERSONALITIES, AS FOLLOWS:

A. CABLE OUR AMBASSADORS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND HAITI, ASKING THEM TO APPROACH THE PRESIDENTS (WHO MAKE ALL THE DECISIONS THERE) TO CONFIRM THEY ARE STILL COMMITTED TO VOTING FOR LIFTING SANCTIONS, AND SAYING

THAT WE UNDERSTAND THEIR REASONS FOR DOING SO.

B. A PERSONAL APPROACH TO NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR SEVILLA-SACASA, AS THE BEST ROUTE TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA, SAYING THAT WHILE WE WILL LIKELY ABSTAIN, BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL SYMBOLISM THAT ATTACHES TO THE U.S. VOTE, NONETHELESS WE SEE CONSIDERABLE ADVANTAGE TO HAVING THE SANCTIONS LIFTED BEFORE THIS DIVISIVE ISSUE PERMANENTLY DAMAGES THE FABRIC OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM. SEVILLA HAS HINTED TO US THAT NICARAGUA MIGHT VOTE FOR, ALTHOUGH THE CONTEXT CLEARLY WAS THAT OF FOLLOWING THE U.S. NONETHELESS, IT WOULDN'T HURT NICARAGUA'S IMAGE TO BE ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF A VOTE FROM THE U.S.

C. AN APPROACH TO BOLIVIA, VIA CABLE, AND TO GUATEMALA, EITHER BY CABLE OR THROUGH PERSONAL CONTACTS, SAYING THAT WE WILL LIKELY ABSTAIN, BUT ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DAMAGE TO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM IF RESULTS ARE INCONCLUSIVE. WE KNOW THEY SHARE OUR CONCERNS, AND HOPE THEY WILL WEIGH THEIR INTERESTS CAREFULLY IN DECIDING HOW TO VOTE. WE WOULD STRESS BOLIVIA'S PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE RIO TREATY AS AN ELEMENT OF SECURITY WITH HER NEIGHBORS, FROM WHOM SHE FEELS FAR FROM SECURE.

7. THIS WOULD SCRAP THE APPROACH SUGGESTED IN REF A. WE WOULD OF COURSE TELL THE BRAZILIANS EXACTLY WHAT WE
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ARE UP TO BEFORE EMBARKING ON THIS COURSE. REQUEST
YOUR GUIDANCE. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE, SANCTIONS, TOSEC 444
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE240009
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: FMCNEIL:JD
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740312-0179
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741179/aaaacotq.tel
Line Count: 203
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: (A) STATE 236997 (B) NEW DELHI 14456
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Aug-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <14 MAR 2003 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CUBA SANCTIONS - TROUBLED OUTLOOK FOR QUITO
TAGS: PFOR, EC, CU
To: ISLAMABAD KABUL
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005